

VZCZCXRO1958

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0045
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE IMMEDIATE
RUEPGDA/USEUCOM JIC VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS ATHENS 001710

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR EUR/SE, EUR/ACE, F- PLEASE PASS DAN ROSENBLUM
USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA, AID/W FOR OFDA ROB ANDREW & ANNE
CONVERY
GENEVA PLEASE PASS TO USAID AND RMA
BUDAPEST PLEASE PASS TO USAID/RFMC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: GREECE DISASTER DECLARATION

REF: A. ATENS 1687

[1](#)B. ATHENS 170

[1](#)1. I am declaring a disaster in Greece for the loss of life, loss of property, and loss of livelihoods caused by the extensive wildfires currently raging throughout Greece. I request USD 100,000 for immediate disaster relief from USAID/DCHA/OFDA. The Government of Greece has not yet made an official request for U.S. assistance other than for firefighting equipment/aircraft, which is an issue we will pursue over a longer time horizon. However the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) has now officially asked Embassy Athens for both material and monetary support in order to provide food, shelter and clothing to the many Greeks across the country who were forced out of their homes by the fires. (Note: HRC letter faxed to EUR/SE).

[1](#)2. As of August 27, Greek authorities continue to struggle to contain thirty to fifty wildfires burning throughout the country - down from one hundred and seventy reportedly burning on Saturday. The Government of Greece (GOG) is doing all it can to bring the wildfires under control and protect property and lives, but the extent of the wildfires has been unprecedented and GOG resources are not sufficient to adequately respond to this disaster over the short term. Other countries in the region have provided firefighting assistance to Greece, but we are not aware of any grants of humanitarian assistance to the HRC.

[1](#)3. The GOG declared a national state of emergency on Saturday, August 25, when confronted with 170 fires. As part of its relief efforts for victims of the fire, the GOG has pledged support for rebuilding, tax breaks and pension/salary supports for security service personnel. However the USG can and should step in with support for the immediate humanitarian relief for the affected communities, via the HRC. U.S. Embassy will work in collaboration with USAID to coordinate with the GOG and other donors to avoid duplication of effort.
COUNTRYMAN